

## Natural Resources BMPs

### Conservation Measures

- Development practices that protect natural resources include the use of conservations subdivisions that cluster or concentrate development to maximize and provide large, contiguous open space. Zoning ordinances commonly include requirements for open space preservation in developments. The use of low impact development practices or [green growth guidelines](#) promotes environmental protection by minimizing the foot print of development by avoiding sensitive areas and concentrating development in appropriate areas.
- Buffer Zones are used to distance land disturbing activities for sensitive environments.
- Zoning may be used to control uses and intensity of development in areas requiring protection. Type of zoning districts may include conservation, agricultural or rural zones. Overlay zones may be used to protect scenic corridors or viewsheds.
- Ecosystem services is the recognition of natural assets (goods and services) provided by the environment that benefit human health and economy. There is a growing need to consider ecosystem services with development proposals to provide management and protection for the benefits. [USDA Forest Service Ecosystem Webpage](#) includes information on the services provided by wetlands, floodplains, vegetation (carbon absorption and storage), and habitat.
- Natural Resources inventory will identify the natural resources occurring and where they are located in a particular geographic area, from individual property parcel to the whole region. Natural resources inventory may include identifying air quality, water, soils, geologic formations, farmlands, forests, minerals, wetlands, and plant and animal species. The inventory provides a property owner or community with the location, quantity, quality, and vulnerability of its natural resources to development. The inventory can identify natural hazards and development constraints, such as floodplains, poor soils and slopes.
- Site finger printing is a site inventory practice employed to identify natural conditions prior to site planning. Site finger printing is a important part of the development practices promoted in the [green growth guidelines](#) low impact development practices and the [Coastal Stormwater Supplement](#). Site finger printing is the identification of naturally sensitive or constrained areas that may be designed around and/or utilized for natural benefits such as stormwater management, or meeting open space/recreation requirements.
- Conservation development is a development design practice that maximizes open space by consolidating site development potential into a smaller area leaving larger, continuous open space. Conservation

- developments can be used to avoid environmentally sensitive areas identified by site finger printing.
- Subdivision ordinance and land development codes, regulating land development, can include open space preservation, height restrictions, scenic preservation, and limits on impervious surfaces.

## **Acquisition**

- Acquisition and conservation easement programs are methods of preserving natural or agricultural lands from development. Acquisition provides fee simple ownership by the public or non-governmental conservation organizations. Conservation easements are non-possessory interest that provides control or limitations of use on natural resource located on a property. Conservation Easements may be donated or purchased from a private landowner, who voluntarily gives up development rights of property while maintaining ownership. Tax benefits and incentives are available for the establishment of conservation easements. Oversight of conservation easements is given to a governmental agency or a non-governmental conservation organization.

## **Greenways**

- Greenways are open space that may be used for non-motorized transportation, utilized by people and/or animals to move between the built and natural environments.
- Green infrastructure is preserved green space that can serve as connection between natural areas, and can include Greenways. Green Infrastructure provides ecosystem services, using the natural environment or creating natural features to provide benefits such as stormwater and flood management. Green infrastructure can include working lands, farmlands and forests, with conservation value.

## **Shared Docks**

- Shared docks is a method of protecting marsh resources by reducing the number of docks and their impacts, most notably runoff pollution and marsh die off from shading. The [Coastal Resources Division](#) is responsible for permitting docks on tidal waters.

## **Accessibility**

- Accessibility is important to insure to provide public access to natural areas such as beaches, rivers and lakes. Access to public lands should not be restricted by adjacent private development. One method to

provide public access is by access strips, a strip of land used to provide public access across private property.

### **Coastal Georgia Land Conservation Initiative**

- Coastal Georgia Land Conservation Initiative (CGLCI) is a collaborative project between Georgia Department of Natural Resources, [Georgia Conservancy](#), and Association County Commissioners of Georgia to identify critical coastal lands for preservation and promote sustainable development practices. The identification of critical lands and their rare habitats will allow preservation through conservation easements or acquisition and for local governments to amend their plans and development codes to protect these critical lands.